

What is a mass mailing?

A mass mailing is an unsolicited mailing initiated by a Member to his/her constituency totaling 500 or more pieces of substantially identical content, whether such mail pieces are deposited to USPS as single pieces or in bulk, or at the same time (single drop) or different times (cumulative) over the course of a session of Congress. The term "mass mailing" and "mass communication" do not apply to:

- Mailings/communications in direct response to mail/communications from persons to whom the matter is transmitted, i.e., a solicited response.
- Mailings/communications to other Members of Congress and/or to Federal, State, and/or local government officials; and
- Mailings/communications of news releases to the communications media.

What forms are required to be submitted to Commission for approval for a mass mailing?

The following items must be submitted to the Franking Commission for review in order to distribute a Mass Mailing:

- [Advisory Opinion Request Form](#)
- [Member's Franking Certification Form](#)
- [Single Drop Mass Mail Obligation Form](#)
- PDF file of the mailer the office wishes to send

What is a mass communication?

A mass communication is an unsolicited communication initiated by a Member and distributed to 500 or more constituents, the content of which is substantially identical, and regardless of means of distribution, such as (radio advertisement, telephone town hall meeting, newspaper advertisement)

What forms are required to be submitted for approval for a mass communication?

The following items must be submitted to the Franking Commission for review in order to distribute a Mass Communication:

- [Advisory Opinion Request Form](#)
- [Member's Franking Certification Form](#)
- PDF file of the communication

What is a "cumulative" mass mailing?

A "cumulative" mass mailing is a mailing of which less than 499 pieces will be deposited to USPS on a given day but which will in the aggregate total more than 500 pieces deposited to USPS over the course of a session of Congress.

What is a "single drop" mass mailing?

A "single drop" is a mass mailing of which 500 or more pieces will be deposited to the USPS on the same day.

What means may a Member use to transmit official correspondence and communications?

A Member may use whatever means are available to the public in the market place, which includes but is not limited to, Franked mail, e-mail, faxes, newspaper inserts, posters, flyers, banners, signs, telephone conference calls, videoconferencing, automated telephone calls, audio and video messaging, advertisements, public service announcements and handouts.

What is the "Mass Mail Statement?"

The following text is the mass mail statement: "This mailing was prepared, published, and mailed at taxpayer expense." A Member is required to include this statement on every mass mailing. The statement must appear on page one of a document or on the address side of the envelope or mailing panel/label; must be prominently displayed; and not be printed in smaller than a 7 point typeface.

What is an Advisory Opinion?

An Advisory Opinion is an opinion issued by the Commission as to whether or not a proposed mailing/communication is in compliance with the applicable provisions of law and House Rules and Regulations and whether it is or is not eligible for distribution under a congressional frank.

When is an Advisory Opinion required?

A Member is required by law to request an Advisory Opinion and House Regulations, prior to printing, producing, or distributing a mass communication when a third party cost is incurred.

Where, and to whom, can a mass mailing or communication be distributed?

A Member is authorized to distribute a mass mailing or mass communications to constituents in the congressional district the Member currently represents. If it is a newspaper or radio advertisement it must serve portions of your district.

What are the restrictions against inflammatory rhetoric against a particular Member or party?

You may not use derogatory language against another Member or quote from extraneous material critical of another Member. You may not use offense words against a Member or party or misrepresent the position of another Member.

May I send a Christmas card or greeting under the Frank?

The law prohibits the use of the Frank for any card or message expressing holiday greetings for any traditional holiday for example, Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving.

May I send under the frank a birthday greeting that was requested by a constituent?

No, birthday, anniversary, wedding, birth, retirement, and condolence messages and similar personal greetings are prohibited.

May I send voter registration information to my constituent in a mass mailing?

Yes, a Member may send under his/her frank materials regarding voter registration and other information on voting as long as it is nonpartisan and contains no political material.

May I include a question in my questionnaire to constituents, asking for their party affiliation?

No, you can not ask for party affiliation nor can you use party affiliation from a mail list.

May I write a letter of recommendation for personal friend with no official ties to my congressional office?

No, you may only write a letter of recommendation for a current or former employee or any individual that has worked with the Member in an official capacity. Members can write recommendations for military academy and political appointees.

May I co-sponsor an event with an outside entity?

A Member may not lend his frank to any organization, association or persons for the benefit for that organization.

Can I enclose a franked envelope with my questionnaire to be used to return constituents answers?

No, you are not permitted to send a franked envelope to return anything from a constituent, only the Member has use of the franking privilege.

Do you have a question that isn't answered here? [Ask the Franking Commission a question.](#)